

The fraternity has worked hard to promote responsible management of the desert bighorn and its habitat. By building and maintaining hundreds of water development projects, fighting disease, and educating domestic sheep herders on the importance of maintaining strict separations between bighorn sheep and domestic herds, the fraternity has provided necessary water resources to Southern Nevada wildlife and ensured a healthy bighorn sheep population for future generations.

I commend the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn on their 50th anniversary, and I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MIRA BALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and congratulate my good friend, Mira Ball. On June 5, Mira will receive the Midway College Legacy Award for her many contributions and years of service to Midway College, located in Midway, KY.

Mira is the first ever recipient of this award, which will be given out at the Inaugural Spotlight awards in June. The purpose of the Legacy Award is to recognize "a person or persons that have impacted Midway College over a period of many years by giving time, service, support and/or resources." With such a description, it's no wonder that Mira was the first in line to receive it.

Mira's contributions to Midway College, which is Kentucky's only women's college and a leader in degree programs for men and women, are aplenty. She has served on the board of trustees since 1990, became the first woman to chair the board in 1997, and was honored to be elected a life trustee in 2000. Last year, she served as interim chair while the institution was in a transitional period.

Even with her devotion to Midway College, Mira has amazingly found time to pursue a multitude of other interests and causes. She became the first woman president of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce in 1991 and was also the first woman to chair the University of Kentucky board of trustees, a post she occupied from 2007 to 2010. If you hadn't noticed, my friend Mira has never been afraid to be the first to do anything.

Additionally, Mira has been one of our State's strongest advocates for education reform, and she currently serves on the endowment board of Kentucky Educational Television, KET. She is also an involved member of the Calvary Baptist Church and is an active philanthropist to health care and education groups.

Somehow, amidst this seemingly endless stream of extracurricular activities, Mira carves out some time for her day job. She serves as the chief financial officer for the very successful Ball Homes LLC homebuilders, which she runs with her husband, Don, and their three children—Ray Ball, Mike Ball,

and Lisa Ball Sharp. In addition to their children, Mira and Don have seven grandchildren—making for a wonderful family that is undoubtedly her biggest achievement of all.

Mira's tireless efforts to better the lives of others deserve the recognition of this body. Thus, I ask that my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in honoring Mira Ball, and congratulating her for being the first-ever recipient of the prestigious Midway College Legacy Award.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, 26 years ago Members of Congress decided to designate May as National Foster Care Month. Since then, the U.S. Congress, the Children's Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Foster Parent Association have worked together to recognize the work of foster families, social workers, faith-based and community organizations, and others who are improving the lives of foster youth across the country and to encourage all Americans to participate in efforts to serve these children throughout the year.

I have come to the floor today, alongside my esteemed colleague and co-chair on the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, to recognize the foster parents, social workers, and advocates from my home State of Louisiana and around the country who play an essential role in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States. I also want to acknowledge the leaders of the House Caucus on Foster Youth—Representative KAREN BASS, Representative TOM MARINO, Representative MICHELE BACHMANN, and Representative JIM McDERMOTT—who already have or will soon speak on the floor, as well, to commemorate National Foster Care Month.

Each day 691 new children enter the foster care system because of abuse or neglect. Each week 4,852 children find themselves on the beginning of their journey through "the system." Over 79,000 children will call this system home for more than 3 years, and more than 23,400 young adults will "age out" of the system without a safe, permanent family. Of those that age out, studies indicate that only 25 percent have a high school diploma or GED, less than 2 percent finish college, over half experience homelessness, and nearly 30 percent have been incarcerated.

As I have long said, governments do many things well, but raising children is not, and will never be, one of them. Our foster care system should be temporary—it is a temporary place where children should go to be protected and nurtured until they can be returned to their birth family, be placed with extended family, or be connected with an adoptive parent or parents. Unfortunately, all too often this is not how it happens. Forty percent of those eligi-

ble for adoption will wait over 3 years in foster care before being adopted. Even worse, 23,000 youth—25 percent of those eligible for adoption—"age out" or emancipate from the system each year. We cannot rest until our Federal and state governments are 100 percent successful at connecting these children—who have been placed under the government's care due to no fault of their own—with permanent, safe, and loving families.

It is our responsibility to find homes for the huge numbers of abandoned and orphaned children in the United States. For this reason, I created a new pilot grant in the fiscal year 14 Omnibus to enable States to initiate intensive and exhaustive child-focused recruitment programs, proven to increase adoptions out of foster care 3 to 1. The \$4 million dollars that I secured for this program will enable States to move foster youth eligible for adoption into permanent families at a much higher rate than traditional recruitment strategies. This is because these grants will provide social workers with the resources, time, and mandate to actually open up the file of youth in care and identify the names and contact information of parents, relatives, caregivers, and other significant adults in that child's life. This intense review, often called "case mining," is key in locating a caring adult able to commit to reunification, adoption or legal guardianship for foster youth.

There are many other strategies that our government can implement to increase permanency for foster children. Just last week the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, led by executive director Kathleen Strotzman, hosted a policy focused briefing to educate congressional staff about how postadoption services are cost-effective and enormously beneficial alternatives to children reentering foster care or having their adoptions dissolved. The Federal Government spends an average of \$27,236 annually for each child in care covered by Federal funding—and much more for those in group homes or residential treatment centers—compared to \$5,043 for a child receiving adoption assistance covered by Federal funding adoptions. There currently is no Federal funding stream dedicated exclusively to postadoption services. We as legislators must consider ways in which we can increase the overall resources dedicated to post-adoption.

As I have stated, it is our responsibility to invest in initiatives that are proven to be successful in finding permanent solutions for our nation's foster children. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor S. Res. 442, "Recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system."